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MEX-8/1

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

✓/Sunday

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36-H

Action

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Control: 10815

Rec'd: December 18, 1961  
2:32 p.m.

026

FROM: Mexico City

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1744, December 17, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

PRIORITY

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I had a secret, frank and friendly hour long talk with President Lopez Mateos at his home this morning summary of which follows:

1. I commenced conversation by saying that I recognized Mexican policy must be based on Mexico's own estimate of its self-interest. On other hand, I was sure he would understand vote in OAS plus projected visit created problem for US which would be compunder if another negative vote cast at MFM. I wished principally to get his advice on visit, but was also at his service discuss substantive problem if he wished.

2. Lopez Mateos said Mexico could not abandon its "position". (He did not say "vote") I inquired whether he had personally had occasion recently read text article 6 Rio treaty. He replied in the affirmative. I then asked whether the interpretation of article 6 was the important thing or whether real basis Mexican position was its doctrine absolute non-intervention based on Mexican historical experience. He replied latter was the case and said his regime was transitory and could not assume responsibility for reversing historical Mexican position on non-intervention. (I interpret this to mean Mexican opposition to OAS multilateral action of any kind directed against any American state for any reason.)

3. Lopex Mateos emphasized this did not mean Mexican sympathy for Castro or Communist doctrine. He referred in this connection to various measures which Mexico had unilaterally taken against

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-2- 1744, December 17, 7 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO) from Mexico City

Castro including refusing to sell Mexican petroleum products, cooperation in preventing transshipment US goods to Cuba and an assertion new to me that Mexican policy was to prevent shipments of Mexican foodstuffs to Cuba.

4. I said foregoing left my President difficult choice since I was certain he wished friendship with Lopez Mateos, but on other hand had to consider US public opinion and interpretation which would be given abroad to visit which followed closely on the heels of Mexican negative vote in MFM. It seemed to me principal question was ~~crediting~~ timing. President Kennedy has, as he knew, preferred visit later in year. Perhaps best solution would be delay "fixing time for visit" (I did not use word "postpone") until after MFM. He said this would be satisfactory, but wished make clear Mexico willing give President Kennedy warm reception now. I expressed appreciation, but pointed out difficulty any other solution since short time between conclusion of MFM and January 27 would be inadequate make security and other preparations but no mention was made of a new date.

5. I suggested it would be desirable consider possibility some kind official statement in view of press speculation about visit in January. He agreed and said he would instruct Tello talk with me about this and attempt work out something. Will telegraph when I have additional information this point.

6. I then said that as we understood absolute character Mexican doctrine non-intervention, I hoped he would understand importance US gives doctrine democracy also in OAS charter. We sincerely believe we are on side of angels when we support right of people all countries chose their own government and when we say there is parallelism between peace and democracy. As applied to Castro, our principle means that Cuban people have right to chose their own destiny, a right which currently is being denied to them. I said that in addition I hoped he would understand US Attaches greater importance than Mexico to the security and even military implications of a Communist beach-head in hemisphere and our deep concern that Communism could spread to other American republics. He acknowledged understanding US views on security

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but said he thought it was difficult in practice to achieve real democracy. I acknowledged difficulty, but pointed to great progress which has been made in this direction in recent decades, something which is not possible under Communist control.

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MEX-8/4

INCOMING TELEGRAM

*Department of State*

36-H

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Action

Control: 10816  
Rec'd: December 18, 1961  
2:33 p.m.

ARA

Info

FROM: Mexico City

50

SS

TO: Secretary of State

SR

G

NO: 1744, December 17, 7 p.m. (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

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7. President then repeated Tello rationale that as practical matter it is preferable Castro be allowed fall of his own weight. I said I could agree with this in abstract, but entrenched strength of Communist apparatus in Cuba made obsolete yardsticks usually applied measure stability of regimes which depended on support of at least significant segment of people. I expressed opinion it would be imprudent expect Cuban people alone to oust Castro and argued from this premise that conclusion logically followed multilateral steps should be taken which worked toward ultimate isolation of Castro regime and reduction its subversive capabilities. I used as example Mexican intelligence of undoubted reliability that Cuban Ambassador recently summoned Mexican students to Cuban Embassy and lectured them on failure agitate effectively so as to earn monies given them by Cuban Embassy. I expressed opinion Cuban Embassy and all Communist activity was directed not only against US, but against PRI party and Mexico itself and noted Marxist doctrine called for elimination of liberal as well as conservative opposition, both potential and existing. To this President replied with familiar Mexican argument that only effective way deal with Communist danger is improve standards of living of people under Alliance for Progress.

8. I then inquired whether he had taken into account effect of negative vote or votes on a further weakening of confidence

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From Mexico City

which is essential to Mexican economic growth. He deplored this but implied that need to follow traditional foreign policy overriding.

9. At this point, he suggested Tello and I attempt between now and January 10 to reconcile US and Mexican points of view on MFM. I said I would gladly attempt to do so. Lopez Mateos stressed that much depended on precise issue on which Mexico would be required to cast its vote. Any instruction which Department wishes to give me in this regard would be appreciated.

(On basis Lopez Mateos statements alone there is little room for optimism even recognizing he left door slightly open by suggesting talks with Tello. On other hand, Lopez Mateos appeared understand vote by Mexico would accomplish no practical purpose since decision two-thirds majority binding on all. Also we should not disregard fact dissatisfaction with Mexican position on Cuban issue widespread except in far left. Finally, we also note Aleman, Rodriguez, Ortiz Mena, Diaz Ordaz and others are concerned and are allegedly working to find face-saving formula. Possibility of Mexican abstention should not therefore be entirely discounted.)

10. There was also inconclusive discussion of need of both UN and OAS demonstrate they are not only debating societies but capable dealing with problems our time. I suggested failure of OAS to function might ultimately have consequences which would not serve best interests of LA.

11. In light of foregoing my recommendations to questions posed in DEPTTEL 1697 are:

A. We should delay until after MFM any further discussion regarding specific date for meeting. We will then be in

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From Mexico City

better position determine best timing from standpoint our interests. Suggest Department take particular care avoid implying January 27 date was agreed upon, even tentatively so as to help Mexico save face. In regard to face, it is not impossible that Mexicans will rationalize that since Lopez Mateos "stood up" to US on issue of visit Mexico has more freedom change negative vote to abstention.

B. We should await discussions with Tello on possible public announcement which should give us outline of rationale most acceptable to Mexico. Department will understand rationale is much more important to Mexico than to US. Lopez Mateos acquiescence in postponement should not be interpreted as equivalent of no displeasure. On contrary, President is almost certain to have hoped US would bail him out again.

C. After MPM, it would probably be preferable continue discussions re visit through this Embassy. But suggest definitive decision on this point be reserved.

D. Best chance of inducing change in Mexico's attitude is maintenance firm but friendly attitude until such time as light begin to dawn on Mexico that cooperation has to be a two-way street, and that Mexico needs US more than we need Mexico. It is important that in weeks ahead each statement by a US official and each action on loan applications be carefully considered in light of probable effect on Mexican decisions. Former Foreign Minister Ezequiel Padilla and other Mexican friends have urged in talks with me that US avoid any statement or action which would lead Mexico believe we attach no importance their attitude on Cuba.

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*See next cable  
attached*

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